



**Ron C. Cross**

## SUMMERTIME BITS & PIECES - GOOD NEWS & BAD NEWS

*By Ron C. Cross, Board of Commission Chairman*

Here's the scoreboard on some of our current road projects:

- Belair Road/Industrial Park Drive Connector: Sixty to ninety days to finish alignment leveling with existing roads. We thought it would be open by now. Bad news!
- Gibbs Road at Washington Road: A mix-up between GA Power and Bell South caused Bell South to go underground with cable rather than overhead. Probably better for the long haul. Good News! Project completion delayed by six to eight weeks. Bad news!
- Hardy-McManus Road at Washington Road: New intersection will be complete in three to four weeks, shortly after school starts. Good news!

- Halali Farm Road at Washington Road: Accidents continue to happen regularly. Bad News! The County has permission from GDOT to do a temporary project to improve the line-of-sight, and right-of-way has been purchased and construction will begin shortly with completion in 60-90 ninety days. Good news!

- Washington Road at Goodwill Industries: Severe accidents continue to happen. Really bad news! After almost two years, we finally have permission from the CSX Railroad to do the installation of the center turn lane. There is one more historical document to complete, and we can probably have the project under contract in 60 days. Good news!

- New road at Greenbrier High School: The private developer is working hard on the new road from the high school to Washington Rd. near Old Washington Road. They plan to have the work near the school completed shortly after school starts. The total project will not be completed until the end of the year since GDOT has not finalized the intersection design at Washington Road. Once plans are final, the County will proceed to construct the intersection. This is the result of almost three years of efforts to relieve the traffic problems and concerns at these schools. The extension of William Few parkway in the near future will complete these plans. Good News!

More good news! Our efforts to increase buying opportunities for County residents are showing results. Our sales tax receipts set another new record for the June reporting period, up almost \$200,000 per month. If this continues, I am sure that the next budget process can include serious conversation about a tax roll-back for residential properties.

Sad news! It is always disturbing when a public official abuses the public trust for personal gain and/or glory. It is particularly upsetting when it is a resident of Columbia County. The only reason this is mentioned here is to assure you that your Board of Commissioners and your Constitutional Officers are fully aware of the shadow that this type occurrence casts on all public officials and that we must strive to work not only within the letter of the law, but within the intent of the law. We must set a higher standard to deserve the honor that you bestow on us in letting us represent you in important matters. Thank you for your continued support of our government, and we renew our efforts to deserve the trust that you place in us.



**Pam Tucker**

## MOVING TO THE RIGHT FOR SIRENS AND LIGHTS!

*By Pam Tucker, Emergency Services Director*

If you or someone you love is in need of emergency assistance, you want help to get there right away. Did you know that there is one thing everyone can do to help responders provide this emergency assistance as quickly as possible? It's as simple as Moving to the Right for Sirens and Lights!

Every year in the U.S., there are almost 16,000 collisions involving fire department emergency vehicles while responding to or returning from incidents. Many people panic or simply do not adhere to the rules of the road for approaching emergency vehicles. The law is very specific - drivers must yield the right-of-way to an emergency vehicle. There are some simple rules to follow when you're on the road and encounter an emergency vehicle.

- Pull to the right and come to a complete stop. If there is no room to stop, slow down as much as possible.

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## 2006 Fall Recreation Registration

**July 24th – August 12th**

### REGISTRATION HOURS:

Monday – Friday, July 24th – August 4th – 8 AM – 5 PM  
Monday – Friday, August 7th – 11th – 8 AM – 7 PM  
Saturday, August 12 – 9 AM – 1 PM

**Registration at Patriots Park (706-863-7523) or on-line!**

### FOOTBALL/CHEERLEADING

7 & 8 Yr. Flag Football/Cheerleading  
9 & 10 Yr. Tackle Football/Cheerleading  
11 & 12 Yr. Tackle Football

### SOCCER

5 Yr. old Beginners  
Under 8's  
Under 10's  
Under 12's  
Under 14's  
18 and Under



### BASEBALL

8 & 9 Yr. Pitching Machine 9 & 10 Yr. Pitching  
11 & 12 Yr. Midget Boys 13-15 Yr. Junior Boys

### FEES

First child- \$55 Second child - \$50 Third child - \$40  
Out-of-County participants = double the fees above

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- If you are in the left lane, pull over into the right lane if possible – if not, just stop.
- On a 4-lane highway without barriers, both sides of traffic should pull to the right.
- If the emergency vehicle is traveling on the opposite direction of a divided highway or street, you do not need to pull over.
- Be careful when driving by or around any situation where emergency vehicles are parked.
- Drivers should stay at least 500 feet behind emergency vehicles.

Georgia's new Move-Over Law was passed in the aftermath of growing numbers of police, emergency technicians, and DOT workers being killed during routine traffic stops, crash responses, and highway construction projects around the nation. The law requires drivers to move-over one lane when possible if an emergency vehicle with flashing lights is parked on the shoulder of the highway. And, if traffic is too heavy to move-over safely, the law requires drivers to slow down below the posted speed limit instead AND to be prepared to stop.

## New Drop Boxes for Tax Commissioner



**Kay Allen**

Kay K. Allen, Columbia County Tax Commissioner, will create and mail the 2006 real and personal property tax bills shortly. Bills are scheduled for mailing August 11th. This early mailing gives you an extra 30 days to pay (i.e., 90 days instead of the usual 60.) The tax due date is still November 15, 2006.

The continued growth of the County has increased the number of tax parcels by 2,100 over last year. For your convenience, there are now two payment drop boxes. One drive-up box is located on the island to the left of Building A in the Evans Government Center parking lot (look for the orange bicycle

flags); the other drop box is for walk-up use and is located on the north side of Building B by the entrance doors. These drop boxes may be used for both Motor Vehicle and Property Tax payments. Please feel free to contact the Tax Commissioner's Office at (706) 261-8299 with questions pertaining to your property tax bill. You may also stop by our office in Building C, the 2nd floor.



## Wading in the Water

Employees from the Water Quality Department, along with volunteers from the Drainage Basin Advisory Council, will be wading through many of the County's creeks in upcoming weeks looking for illicit discharges. One of the provisions of the County Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit required the County to develop a procedure for detecting and eliminating illicit discharges to the County's creeks. The procedure was created, and implementation began June 30. As staff and volunteers wade in the water, they will be looking for discolored water, greasy deposits, foam, and other abnormal conditions.

If an illicit connection is discovered, the County will begin proceedings to eliminate the connection pursuant to the appropriate sections of the County Code of Ordinances. Jones Creek and Reed Creek are the first two creeks on the list for stream walks. To report a potential illicit discharge, contact the Water Quality Department at 706-855-7246. Eliminating illicit discharges will help ensure that the quality of the water in the County's creeks remains high.



*Columbia County employees Chuck Green (in front) and Jacques Palmer look for illicit discharges in Jones Creek.*

## Animania



Animania is a new County event on Saturday, August 26th from 10 AM to 3 PM in the Columbia County Memorial Garden and Amphitheater located adjacent to the library on 720 N. Belair Road. The admission is free, and activities will include pet-related vendors, contests, games, Mutt Strut parade, and demonstrations. Owners are welcome and encouraged to bring their dogs, keeping in mind the following rules and regulations:

- Dogs only, please
- Dogs must be on leashes and attended to at all times
- Leashes can not be longer than 5 feet
- All dogs must have current vaccinations and identification tags (dogs under 4 months are discouraged as they may not have proper inoculations)
- Please clean up after your pet (use the doggie waste stations and bags provided)
- Owners of aggressive or destructive pets will be asked to kindly leave
- Please no female dogs in season
- Please do not leave cigarette butts on the ground, as they could be dangerous if eaten by pets
- Please maintain a 2 foot distance between your dog and other dogs if possible